

## The Knowledge Bank at The Ohio State University

### Ohio State Engineer

**Title:** Hitchcock Visits Boulder Dam

**Creators:** Ellis, William R.

**Issue Date:** Apr-1934

**Publisher:** Ohio State University, College of Engineering

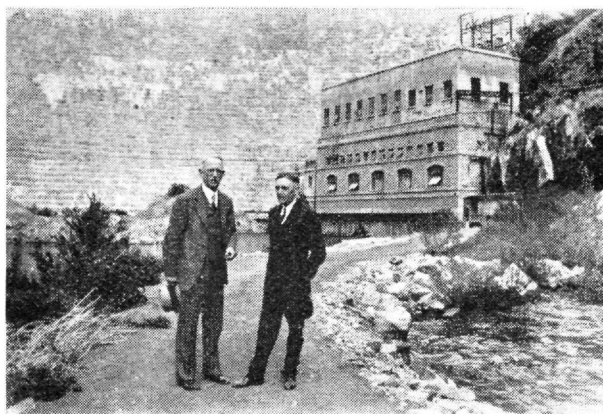
**Citation:** Ohio State Engineer, vol. 17, no. 6 (April, 1934), 6-7.

**URI:** <http://hdl.handle.net/1811/35126>

**Appears in Collections:** [Ohio State Engineer: Volume 17, no. 6 \(April, 1934\)](#)

# Hitchcock Visits Boulder Dam

By William R. Ellis



**D**EAN EMBURY A. HITCHCOCK has just returned from a 6790 mile trip through the West to California. The Dean, a stickler for accuracy, corrects this statement and says that the mileage was exactly 6789 miles by the speedometer. Dean Hitchcock planned the trip to pay his brother in Los Angeles, whom he had not seen in twenty years, a visit and to inspect the Boulder Dam.

On their westward journey, the Dean and his son, who accompanied him, took the southern route which goes through Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and on into California. "There was no back-seat driving on this trip and I enjoyed every mile of it," remarked the Dean. In the 2700 miles of road that they covered in going westward, only one detour was made. Throughout the trip an average of 498 miles a day was maintained! A particularly remarkable average when one considers the time that was taken out now and then to visit points of interest along the way. In the 2700 miles, low gear was not used.

From Phoenix to Los Angeles the road that they took passed over the multiple-dome Coolidge Dam, where the Dean stopped long enough to inspect its structure and take several photographs. The dam is 250 feet high and the domes, in one of which the power plant is housed, are 180 feet apart.

Travelling on, they came to the Roosevelt Dam, which is 1000 feet long, 280 feet high, and much more expensive than the Coolidge Dam. One of the remarkable things that Dean Hitchcock noticed was that they crossed bridge

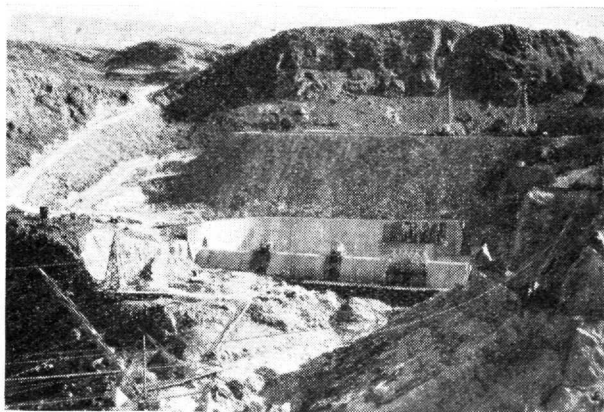
after bridge under which there was no water flowing because of dams farther up-stream.

The Dean very carefully picked their route into Los Angeles so that they might be able to pass as many points of interest as possible. Once in Los Angeles they made their way to his brother's home where they spent several days and visited a lion farm. "We greatly enjoyed watching the lions," he said. "We were told that some people condemn the farm for cruelty to animals. Facts show that the animals live nearly thirty-four years on the farm as compared to sixteen in the wild state. Keepers must feed each animal separately to keep them from eating each other at mealtime."

Los Angeles was soon abandoned and their car headed eastward. But the biggest thrill of their journey, Boulder Dam, was ahead of them. Boulder City, 580 miles from Los Angeles, was reached the first day. By virtue of a letter of introduction from Washington, they were readily admitted to the guarded city. "Boulder City is the most up-to-date town I have ever visited," said the Dean. "All around the city there is only barren rock, but surrounding the administration building there is a beautiful lawn. The streets are perfect: it is a perfect city. There are no loafers allowed in the city. Everyone must have a job or they are not permitted to stay."

Boulder City was built especially for the workmen on the dam. After the dam is completed the city will probably remain there along with many other cities which will spring up along the Colorado River due to the reclamation of that section of the country.

The next day the Dean was escorted to the site of the



dam by the chief engineer. Dean Hitchcock describes the dam as "a stupendous engineering task." He was allowed to inspect every part of the work. While doing this he was introduced to an Ohio State man who had graduated before Dean Hitchcock came to Ohio State.

There are many impressive features of this great undertaking. This dam will form one of the largest artificial lakes in the world since water will be backed up the Colorado for a distance of 115 miles. This would be enough water to cover the State of Ohio to a depth of 1.2 feet. It will scale its way 730 feet up the canyon wall, 200 feet higher than the A. I. U. building. There are 250 miles of two-inch pipe honeycombing the concrete so that cold water may be circulated to cool the concrete in hot weather. The temperature at the dam site ranges from 20 degrees below zero to 130 degrees above.

The Dean was impressed very much by the machinery used in the construction work. The buckets used in pouring the concrete are carried and operated by cables which reach from canyon wall to canyon wall. Each bucket holds 8 cubic yards of concrete. They have two plants, each of which mixes 6000 cubic yards of concrete in 24 hours.

The dam is almost as thick at its base as it is in height. The Dean remarked: "Someone has said that they were afraid that the dam might topple over sometime. Well, if it would, there would still be a dam in the canyon."

After the Boulder Dam is completed there will be built another small dam down the river. It is to be about 75 feet high. Canals for irrigation purposes will be constructed at this dam. The Parker Dam is another separate project which will also be built below the large dam to furnish the city of Los Angeles with water.

The Dean had inspected every part of the work that was accessible from his position on the ground. In order to go to the top, he had to take an elevator; not an elevator in the ordinary sense of the word but rather a small

platform on which he stood and a cable to which he held to keep from falling.

"I had not intended to go to the top, but I was told not to get scared if I got a funny sensation going up. All the way up I was wondering if the operator down in the canyon had sense enough to stop the thing when I got to the top. He landed me in fine shape. My knees got a little shakey when I looked down. The men working up there didn't seem to mind it at all, but I was what you might call a green-horn. I sat down on the corner up there and took several interesting photographs of the work that was going on around me.

"When this dam is completed the artificial lake formed will be one of the most beautiful water scenes in America."

With many beautiful memories of the West and rolls of films to help recall the wonderful scenes which they had viewed, the Dean and his son turned eastward. They took the northern route which goes through Oklahoma City, Columbia, St. Louis, and on to home.

